

# **McKin Superfund Site Public Information Plan and Request for Comments**

**Prepared by: McKIN SUPERFUND SITE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
GRAY, MAINE**

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## **SUMMARY**

The purposes of this document are to: 1) provide a brief summary of the history of the McKin Superfund Site in East Gray and the mediation process; 2) explain what the McKin Superfund Site Citizens' Advisory Group (SAG) is; 3) present the SAG's current public information plan; and 4) seek advice from you about the SAG's public information plan.

The SAG is here to serve the public and act as an independent representative for the local community. Therefore, we encourage you to provide the SAG with your comments, questions and advice. If you have any questions or comments regarding this document or other topics related to the McKin Site, please contact any of the individuals listed on the cover page.

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The history of the McKin Superfund Site begins in the 1970's. Since that time, numerous investigations and cleanup actions have taken place. Most recently, a ground water extraction and treatment system was installed by the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) and began operation in 1991. The focus of the treatment system was to remove trichloroethylene (TCE) from the ground water at the site. However, because of questions regarding the effectiveness of the system, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allowed the PRPs to shut off the system in 1995. The PRPs subsequently prepared a draft report evaluating the ground water treatment system performance and other alternatives available for removing the contamination and/or protecting human health and the environment. Their 1996 draft report proposed permanently shutting down the system and using other methods such as Institutional Controls (Institutional Controls are defined and discussed on page 4) to protect human health.

EPA, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP), and a variety of local individuals and groups expressed concern with the PRP's draft report.

To facilitate constructive communication during discussion of the McKin Site, a Mediation Committee was established in 1997 consisting of individuals and organizations who were especially interested in or affected by the McKin Site. These stakeholders included the EPA, MEDEP, PRPs, Town of Gray, Friends of the Royal River, local water districts, and local citizens. As of December 1997, the Mediation Committee has generally agreed upon five major activities to be conducted at the McKin Site in the future. Although subject to modification, these activities consist of:

- Expansion of the public water supply distribution system and installation of a new well(s)
- Development of Institutional Controls
- Installation of new monitoring wells
- Long-term water sampling of wells and surface water
- Cleanup actions to reduce TCE concentrations in the Royal River

### **McKIN CITIZENS' ADVISORY GROUP ("SAG")**

In April 1997, under the administration of the Maine Rural Water Association, several local members of the Mediation Committee and other interested individuals formed the McKin Superfund Site Citizens' Advisory Group (SAG) to address community concerns about the McKin Site. Specifically, the SAG was created to: 1) provide independent technical advice to evaluate proposals by the regulatory agencies and PRPs, and 2) educate the local community about the nature of the contamination at the McKin Site; the health, environmental, and economic risks posed by the contamination; and alternative ways to deal with the contamination.

In addition to acting in this educational capacity, the SAG was created to work with the EPA, MEDEP, and other stakeholders in the mediation process to find a satisfactory solution to the problems posed by the McKin Site.

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The SAG applied for and was awarded in September 1997 an EPA Superfund Technical Assistance Grant. With this grant, the SAG hired Chris Simpson of the Maine Rural Water Association to manage the project and process advice. The SAG also hired Summit Environmental Consultants, Inc. (Summit) of Auburn, Maine to provide technical advice. Summit has been providing the SAG with technical support and has been attending Mediation Committee meetings since November 1997. With Summit's support, the SAG will evaluate existing data, proposals presented by the PRPs or the regulatory agencies, and make independent recommendations to the EPA and MEDEP regarding future site activities. Most importantly, the SAG will provide the public with objective information regarding the past, current, and future activities at the McKin Superfund Site.

The SAG needs your input regarding the McKin Site and welcomes your questions and comments. Technical questions should be directed to Keith Taylor or Mike Deyling of Summit, while questions about the SAG or the mediation process should be directed to Chris Simpson. If we are unable to adequately answer your question, we will assist you in contacting the appropriate person or agency who can help you. Mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for the SAG contacts are provided on the cover of this document

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## **THE SAG'S PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN**

The SAG has tentatively identified two initial phases that make up the public information plan. Phase 1 consists of gathering basic information from you to determine what you want to know about the McKin Site.

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**Phase I of the SAG's public information plan consists of gathering basic information from you to determine what you want to know about the McKin Site.**

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The document you are now reading is the first step in the SAG's public information plan. We are distributing copies of this document to members of the local community whom we think may be interested in the McKin Site. We are also placing copies of this document in public places like town halls, libraries, and water district offices. The SAG will also prepare a press release for publication in local newspapers. The press release will give a brief summary of the contents of this document and will ask interested persons to notify the SAG to obtain a copy of this document. The SAG will then review all responses from the public about the McKin Site and identify issues/questions that the local community is most interested in.

Phase II of the SAG's public information plan will focus on the subjects or issues in which the public has expressed the most interest. The SAG will develop a plan for providing more information on these subjects to the public. On the following pages, we briefly present four topics that some of you have already expressed interest in, and list some common questions asked about the McKin Site.

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**Phase II will focus on presenting more information on subjects or issues in which you have expressed the most interest.**

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The SAG has identified several possible approaches to disseminating information to the public. These include: newsletters public question-and answer meetings distribution of detailed fact sheets public access cable television programs local high school presentations press releases web site on the Internet other?

Which approach, or combination of approaches, do you think would be most effective and meaningful to you?

### **SAMPLE TOPICS AND QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE MCKIN SITE**

We have already heard from some of you about McKin-related topics that you are interested in. We briefly present four of these topics below, and list some common questions, to illustrate the kind of information that the SAG can provide to the local community.

## **1. Human and Ecological Risks**

TCE is the primary contaminant present in ground water at the site. Because the contaminated ground water at the McKin Site discharges into the Royal River, low levels of TCE have also been detected in the river. The EPA and MEDEP have developed TCE cleanup standards for ground water and the river, and the Mediation Committee is working on other methods to limit public contact with the contaminated water. Questions related to the risks of TCE that the SAG can address include.

- Where are the highest levels of TCE right now?
- What risk is posed by the TCE in the river?
- Are there other risks associated with the TCE in ground water in addition to drinking it?

## **2. Institutional Controls**

Environmental cleanup projects typically include remedial actions such as soil removal or ground water extraction and treatment. However, most cleanup programs take years to complete and are sometimes only partly effective due to the type and distribution of the contaminants. In order to protect the public until the cleanup process is complete, Institutional Controls are often developed. Institutional Controls focus on limiting the potential for public contact with the contamination. Institutional Controls can consist of simple measures such as constructing a fence around the contaminated site and public education programs. Other Institutional Controls include land use ordinances, deed restrictions, or zoning that limit or prohibit the drilling of private wells.

Because of the past difficulty in removing TCE from ground water at the McKin Site, Institutional Controls are being considered for the land overlying and adjacent to the contaminated aquifer. Questions related to Institutional Controls that the SAG can address include:

- How would Institutional controls such as zoning ordinances or deed restrictions affect the value of property?
- How would Institutional Controls be implemented and enforced?
- How long would Institutional Controls be in effect?

## **3. Expansion of Public Water System**

If institutional Controls limit or prohibit the drilling of private wells on private property, public water is typically provided to those properties. For the McKin Site, additional development in the area would require an expansion of the Gray Water District and distribution system. In addition to constructing new water lines to serve these properties, a supply well(s) would be required to meet the new demand. Questions related to expansion of the public water supply that the SAG can address include:

- Where would the new well(s) be located?
- Which properties would be connected to the new system and what would be the cost?
- Would the new supply and distribution system affect district-wide water rates?

#### **4. Royal River Cleanup**

As mentioned earlier, TCE has been detected in the Royal River due to contaminated ground water discharging into it from the adjacent aquifer. Because TCE levels in the river are above MEDEP standards, the MEDEP and EPA are evaluating methods to reduce contaminant levels. Some of these methods involve treating the river directly, while other methods target the TCE in ground water adjacent to the river. Questions related to the Royal River cleanup that the SAG can address include.

- What kind of river treatments are currently being considered, and would treating the river disrupt public use or affect fish and other wildlife?
- Exactly where would treatment of the river or nearby aquifers occur?
- How long would treatment have to occur before the river is clean.

The SAG encourages you to contact us regarding these topics or other McKin-related issues. We would also like to hear from you about ways to disseminate information to the public, and names of other people or organizations to whom we should send this notice. Again, please contact any of the people listed on the cover page with suggestions, questions, or comments.

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